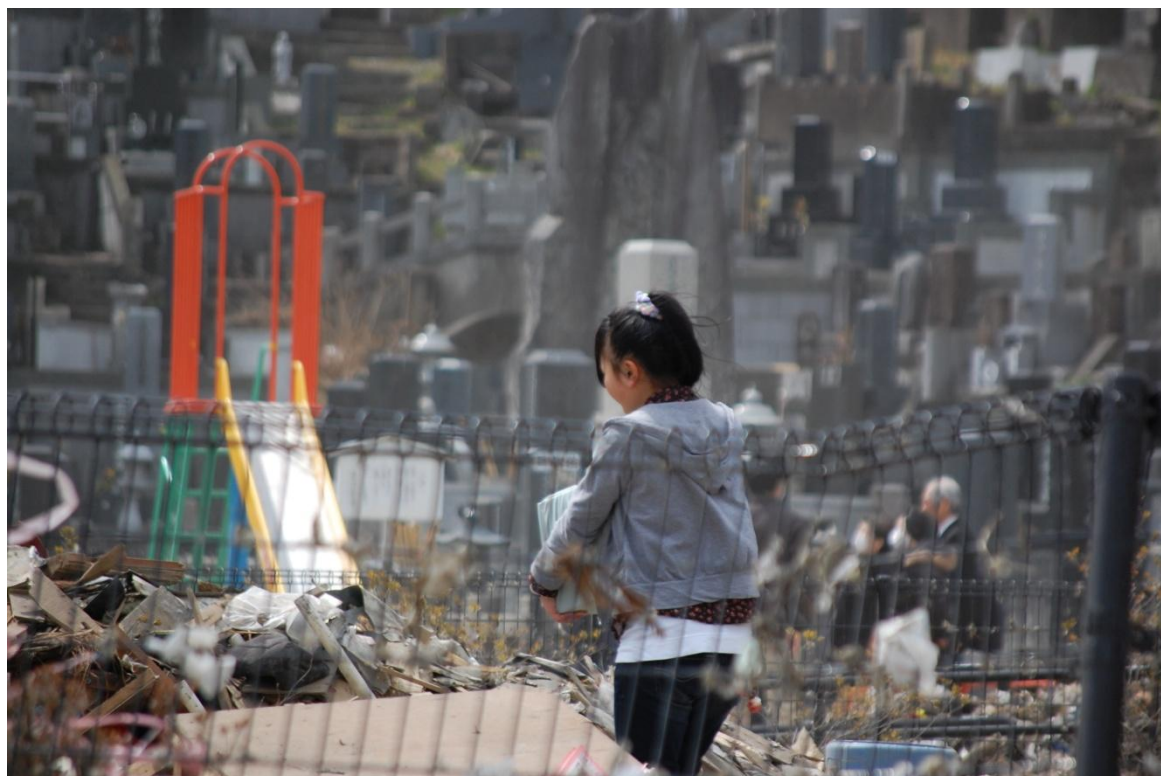


Support Network for Visually Impaired Victims
of the Eastern Japan's Massive Earthquake
InTouch

InTouch Report

Taking Steps Forward
Through Informative Support



JBS
Japan Broadcasting Service
for Persons with Visual Impairment

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Introduction -A shift to informative support-

Since the earthquake struck on the 11th of March 2011, we have been making support efforts targeting visually impaired disaster victims in the coastal regions of the Iwate Prefecture. We will give a general outline of what we have been doing. Unfortunately, we have nothing to report about Fukushima and the nuclear meltdown. We therefore feel misery and helplessness. Also, we are still unable to completely understand the status of visually impaired disaster victims.

After the Great Hanshin Earthquake, an organization called “HABIE” was formed and, along with 1,200 volunteers, confirmed the safety of 1,686 visually impaired disaster victims over a three week period, as well as continuing support efforts for a total of 1,800 individuals for a further year and 8 months.

The Eastern Japan’s Massive Earthquake has exceeded our powers and thoughts, and kept people at a distance. On the 21st, ten days after the earthquake hit, we finally managed to reach the coastline of Miyako City in Iwate via Akita. The tsunami had completely destroyed what was once a town and replaced it with a sea of rubble.

While at a loss for words and growing concerned about the condition of the Fukushima nuclear plant, we were overcome with a feeling of helplessness. We soon realized that the techniques used after the Great Hanshin Earthquake would not be enough and that making safety confirmations would be no easy task.

After worrying over what we should do, and what we were even capable of doing, we decided to base ourselves in Iwate and make a shift to spreading the word through “informative support.”

Since then, while carrying out safety confirmations and support efforts, we have consulted with the radio stations, the social welfare conferences and all of the volunteers in Iwate and have done our best to do our support efforts through “informative support.” The real disability that visually impaired people face is a lack of information. We need a system that fills the role of eyes for the visually impaired, in which they will be continually supported through informative support.

The purpose of this report is to remind people about the Eastern Japan’s Massive Earthquake, not to mention the Great Hanshin Earthquake. We would like to show our gratitude for all those who have continued to provide support to JBS and InTouch.

InTouch Representative Toshinobu Kawagoe

The Eastern Japan's Massive Earthquake State of damage

●Total level of damage (As of May 29th, 2012, Website of the Cabinet Office)

1) Human damages

Deceased – 15,859 Missing – 3,021 Injured – 6,107

2) Structural damages

Completely destroyed – 129,912 Partially destroyed – 258,554

Damaged – 711,348

3) Evacuees Total number of evacuees – 341,235

●Level of damage within Iwate Prefecture (As of May 30th, 2012, Website of the Iwate Prefecture Government)

1) Human damages (Total population: 1,330,147) *As of October 1st, 2010

Deceased – 4,671 Missing – 1,220 Injured – 200

2) Structural damages (completely destroyed and partially destroyed houses)

Number of damaged structures – 24,877

3) Level of damage to the main areas of the coastline

	Total population	Deceased	Missing	Structures damaged
Rikuzentakata	23,300	1,555	230	3,341
Ofunato	40,737	340	81	3,629
Kamaishi	39,574	888	156	3,648
Otsuchi	15,276	803	475	3,717
Yamada	18,617	604	153	3,167
Miyako	59,430	420	97	4,675
Total	196,934	4,610	1,192	22,177

●Status of visually impaired people in Iwate Prefecture (Survey of the cities and towns as of May 30th, 2012)

	The disabled: Total population	The disabled: Deceased	Visually impaired people: Total population	Visually impaired people: Deceased
Rikuzentakata	1,155	123	104	8
Ofunato	1,743	42	190	4
Kamaishi	2,039	64	190	4
Otsuchi	912	Unknown	87	Unknown
Yamada	851	61	93	4
Miyako	2,462	36	178	Unknown
Total	9,162	326	842	20

*Total population according to the Iwate Prefecture Government's website as of March 31st, 2010

*Total population of the disabled/visually impaired people = The number of those who have the identification booklet for the challenged

Those that have given their help and support

●Everyone at the Iwate Welfare Association for the Visually Impaired, and Mr. Hisayuki Miura

Iwate Prefecture, which has total land area second only to Hokkaido, took a substantial amount of damage to its coastal region. There was a need to aid visually impaired disaster victims as soon as possible and the unfamiliar terrain proved to add to the challenge of our support efforts. We received a great deal of on-site help and support from the Iwate Welfare Association for the Visually Impaired and its vice-president, Mr. Hisayuki Miura.

The association, which always supports the visually impaired in Iwate, bore the burden of our on-site response headquarters and offered us with a great deal of support after the earthquake hit.

Mr. Miura also gave us a lot of helpful advice when we were trying to find the most efficient methods of support. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him once again.



Vice-president, Mr. Hisayuki Miura



The Iwate Welfare Association for the Visually Impaired

Relief Supplies



The relief supplies included collapsible white canes for the blind and talking thermometers. We received donations from many individuals and were able to pass them out to those in need with the help of The Iwate Welfare Association for the Visually Impaired as well as other groups and organizations.

●Groups who have given on-site support

Miyako Disaster FM



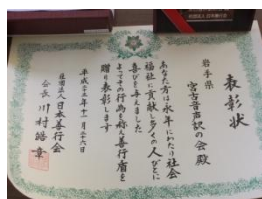
FM One



Ofunato Disaster FM



Miyako Society of Verbal Translation



Sekirei (Ofunato City) Yamada-machi Volunteer Readers



Ofunato City

Tohkaishimpo

Yamada-machi public library



Ofunato City Social Welfare Conference

Miyako City Social Welfare Conference



*Inside the Ofunato City Welfare Center

*Inside the Miyako City Welfare Center

●InTouch Organization / Supporting Groups

- JBS -Japan Broadcasting Service for Persons with Visual Impairment-
- My Life Station Association
- Kobe Eyelight Association
- First Wind Association
- Rokusei

●Those who have helped with support efforts

- Canon System and Support Inc., Osaka-kita Office
- Yoshifumi Murakami (USEN Corporation)
- Eiichi Tanimoto
- Kanefuji Industries Corporation
- Bazz Ltd
- Sur Ltd
- Yoichi Oshima
- EEL 21 Inc.
- URO Electronics Ind. Co., Ltd

●Those who have helped with monetary donations, subsidies and relief supplies

Many individuals and organizations offered donations or subsidies for our support efforts. Also, many people helped us by providing relief supplies.

We would like to appreciate their cooperation again.

Total Donations: 1,575,814 yen

Total Subsidies : 6,010,000 yen

Combined Total: 7,585,814 yen

*As of May, 2012

●Donations were sent in from overseas



Ms Naito in Nagoya City,
May 12th, 2011

Support efforts for the victims of the Eastern Japan's Earthquake were taking place all over the world. A group called "We are one, TASUKEAI Mutual Aid for JAPAN" collected donations in India. A member of the group, Ms Miyako Naito, sent the collected contribution of 140,270 yen directly to InTouch.

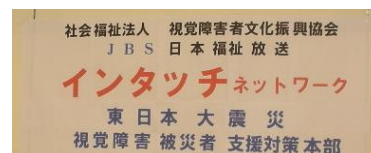
●Relief supplies

White canes, handheld radios, emergency radios, keyholder-shaped talking thermometers, masks, food, stationery, clothing, etc.

InTouch Activities

The morning after the disaster, beginning support for visually impaired disaster victims

At JBS (Japan Broadcasting Service for Persons with Visual Impairment), the day after the earthquake hit (Saturday, March 12th) there was an early morning meeting and the decision was made to begin support efforts while putting together the special broadcasting program for visually impaired victims in the disaster area. Thus, the “Support Network for Visually Impaired Victims of the Eastern Japan’s Massive Earthquake InTouch” was formed.



●InTouch’s Course of Action

1. Dispatch the support team and survey the area
2. Grasp the overall condition of the area and confirm stability
3. Broadcast the level of damage through JBS
4. Provide information and news for those involved through our newsletters and website



Top: InTouch staff solidifying a plan of action. Katsuji Ikeda, Yoko Sato, Daigo Higashi and Toshinobu Kawagoe

Bottom: Some of the relief supplies prepared for the first phase

Setting up locations in Osaka and Iwate

After deciding on a course of action, the InTouch headquarters were set up on the first floor of the JBS Sonezaki Training Institute (Kita Ward, Osaka City. It was later moved to Miyakojima Ward) and the on-site headquarters were set up in the Iwate Welfare Association for Visually Impaired (Morioka City, Iwate Prefecture).

Also, we were able to broadcast out damage reports and other news through the JBS Osaka Studio (Miyakojima Ward).

● InTouch Headquarters
(Kita Ward, Osaka City)



● On-Site Response Headquarters
(Morioka City, Iwate Prefecture)



At the InTouch headquarters we rounded up support volunteers for visually impaired disaster victims, conducted a survey and collected information via telephone and internet, and then compiled stability confirmation data.

● JBS Osaka Studio (Miyakojima Ward, Osaka City)



We broadcast a special program regarding the disaster aimed at visually impaired people from the JBS Osaka Studio.

The support team, headed to the disaster site

●The support team's schedule

[Condition survey / Stability confirmation / Support efforts]

First : 20th - 23rd March, 2011 Morioka / Miyako

Second : 5th - 9th April, 2011 Miyako / Kamaishi / Ofunato

[Condition survey / Stability confirmation / Support efforts as well as informative support via radio]

Third : 17th - 19th May, 2011 Morioka / Miyako / Hanamaki / Ofunato / Rikuzentakata

Fourth : 27th - 29th September, 2011 Miyako / Hanamaki / Ofunato

[Holding Training Seminar] (Training volunteer readers and forming a system for informative support)

Fifth : 27th - 31st October, 2011 Morioka / Ofunato / Miyako

Sixth : 10th - 12th December, 2011 Miyako

Seventh : 24th - 26th February, 2012 Yamada / Miyako

●InTouch staff



InTouch staff members and other volunteers with Naoki Kaneda (center right) and Toshinobu Kawagoe (center left) taken nine days after the earthquake.



Naoki Kaneda (center right) and Toshihiro Ogisaka (center left) before again making their way back to the disaster site with the support of some InTouch staff members.

Support team efforts (1)

Assessing the level of damage/Relief efforts March 20th – 23rd, 2011

On the 20th to 23rd of March, we visited Miyako City, where we surveyed the damage taken to the coastal areas. We tried to find a way to carry out our support efforts while at the same time surveying the status of visually impaired victims.



Compiling damage information in Morioka City

We arrived in Morioka City via Akita Prefecture on the 20th. The most important aspect of support efforts at the time of a disaster is “reliable information.” On the first day we compiled information about the level of damage taken to the towns and cities in Iwate Prefecture at the Iwate Prefectural Center for the Visually and Hearing Impaired as well as at the Iwate Welfare Association for the Visually Impaired, the Iwate Prefecture Government (the Health and Welfare Division for the Disabled) and the Osaka-Wakayama Prefectural Task Force.

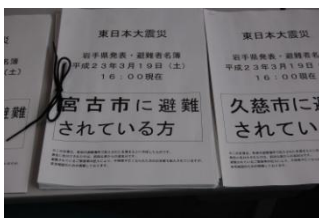
●Iwate Prefectural Center for the Visually and Hearing Impaired



Posted information critical to people in the area, such as the register of evacuees and traffic information



Providing sign language and scribe services to the hearing impaired



“The register of evacuees” presented by the Iwate Prefecture Government

●The Iwate Prefecture Government



The Osaka-Wakayama Prefectural Task Force, set up on the 8th floor of the Iwate Prefecture Government building



Exchanging opinions for stability confirmations at the Health and Welfare Division for the Disabled, Iwate Prefecture Government

Surveying the damage to the coastal region of Miyako City

On the 21st we started moving from Morioka City towards Miyako City by bus. The area around the station was without power and the phone lines were down but it still did not look nearly as bad as it did on TV. The damage appeared light, however a little east from the station (the shoreline) the scenery changed dramatically and the scenes of disaster spread. There were sea vessels capsized along the road and the damaged houses spread out into a sea of rubble.



There were mountains of rubble on the footpaths.



●The disastrous scene at the Kuwagasaki area

We continued on foot to the Kuwagasaki area. The landscape was increasingly devastating. A lot of buildings were completely or partially destroyed and members of the Self-Defense Force were doing their best to cordon off the road.





Members of the Self-Defense Force and the Fire Service were working to cordon off the road. The support team walked along the road and headed to a refuge shelter.

●To the Miyako City Hall

We visited the Miyako City Hall on the 22nd and found its administrative services had come to a halt. The first two floors of the building had taken damage from the tsunami and were completely unusable. The power was out and the internet was down.

There was nothing we could do under these conditions and we were on the verge of giving up. We then decided to go around the refuge shelters and compile information about the visually impaired victims by ourselves.



The tsunami damaged the Miyako City Hall



A clerk sorting out documents outside the City Hall

Life in a refuge shelter

We listened to what the visually impaired victims had to say about when the disaster hit and life in the refuge shelters. The town had changed drastically due to the earthquake and tsunami. As a result, it became difficult for the visually impaired to walk around freely as before and their range of activities became limited. The lack of information was also a serious problem.

They also mentioned that using the restrooms at night was an issue. They were not yet used to the toilets, so they had to wake someone up and be lead out to the restrooms when they needed to use them. This was placing a lot of stress on them.

Life in the refuge shelters was more miserable than restrictive for the visually impaired. After the Great Hanshin Earthquake there were people that stayed in their damaged and dangerous homes and never went to the refuge shelters.

